



BLM Alaska FRONTIERS

News about BLM-managed
public lands in Alaska

ISSUE 91

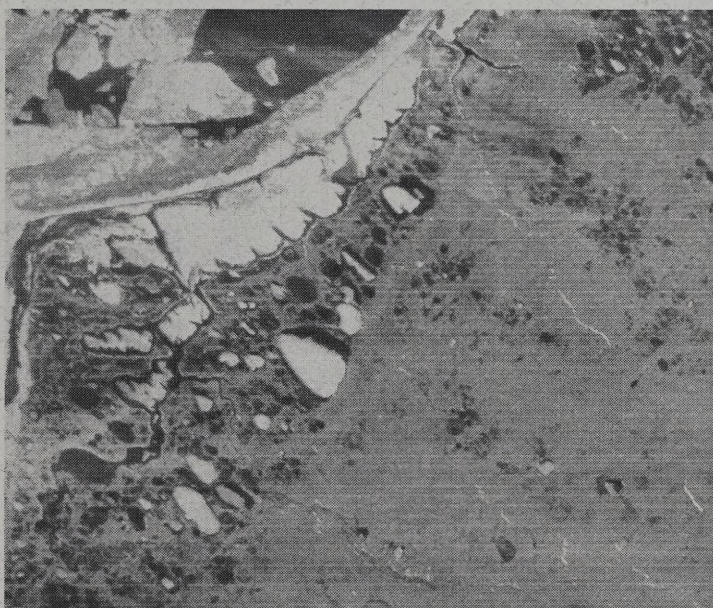
WINTER 2003-04

BLM completes plan for Northwest NPR-A

BLM's preferred alternative for managing 8.8 million acres of federal lands and the federal subsurface lands in the northwest corner of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska designates all lands as open for leasing—but with many conditions. The long-awaited plan was officially released Nov. 28 following a two-year study.

The plan, detailed in the *The Final Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, includes a variety of restrictions and designations to protect water quality, vegetation, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence uses and scenic/recreational values.

The plan incorporates analysis of public comments received on the



This Landsat photo shows a portion of Kasegaluk Lagoon near the village of Wainwright on the coast of the Chukchi Sea. BLM is recommending that the Secretary of the Interior designate 102,000 acres as a Special Area with no surface occupancy restrictions on oil and gas leases.

USGS

draft EIS released in January 2003, as well as descriptions of five possible management alternatives. The preferred alternative was developed by BLM specialists after evaluating comments received from the public, residents of the North Slope Borough, Native corporations, state and local government, industry, and various interest groups.

"This plan will help us implement Congressional direction to maximize the production of the oil and gas resources in an environmentally-safe manner while protecting the important biological, subsistence and cultural values also

found in this area," said BLM Alaska State Director Henri Bisson.

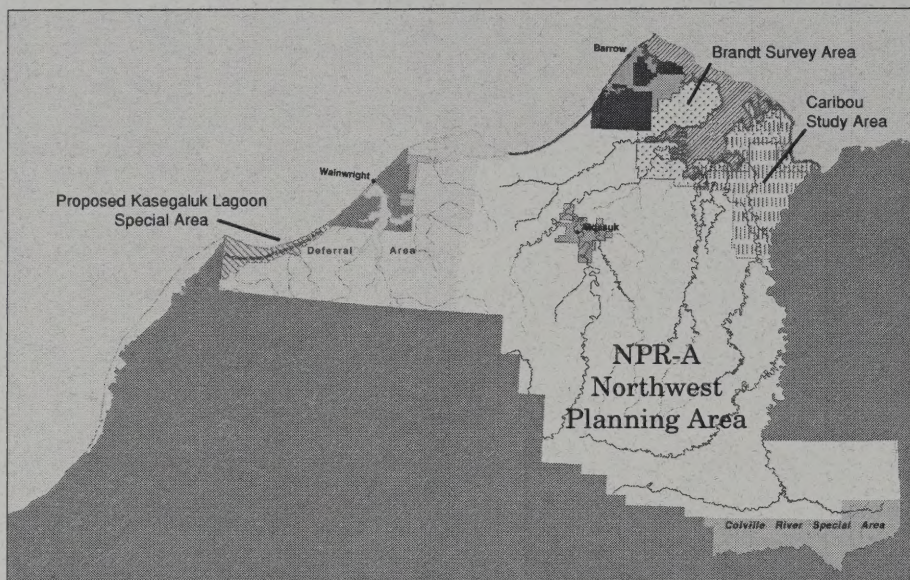
The plan was mailed Nov. 19 to public libraries throughout Alaska, Federal Depository libraries throughout the country, and to Alaska state and local government. An executive summary of the document and maps are posted on the internet, and can be reached through the BLM home page, www.ak.blm.gov.

Bisson anticipates BLM will hold a lease sale for selected tracts in the northwest portion of NPR-A next June. A Record of Decision is anticipated in January, 2004.

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Key provisions of the leasing plan include:

- Defer leasing on about 1.5 million acres (17 percent of the planning area) near Wainwright for the next 10 years
- Recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of 102,000 acres as the Kasegaluk Lagoon Special Area
- Provide no surface occupancy stipulations along coastal areas, in deep-water lakes, along key rivers (16 percent of the planning area), and in the Kasegaluk Lagoon Special Area
- Designate special study areas for Pacific black brandt and caribou
- Conduct areawide studies on habitat for Spectacled and Steller's eiders (both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act) and yellow-billed loons
- Implement stipulations to minimize loss of raptor foraging habitat within the existing Colville River Special Area
- Other stipulations and required operating procedures establish restrictions and guidance that apply to waste prevention and spills, water use, winter overland moves and seismic activity, exploratory drilling, aircraft use and subsistence consultation.

W MORE ON THE WEB...
aurora.ak.blm.gov/npra

2009: BLM-Alaska's ultimate challenge?

BLM-Alaska recently announced an ambitious goal: to complete all land transfer entitlements—Native allotments, Native veteran allotments, and Native Claims Settlement Act and State of Alaska entitlements—by the year 2009.

To reach this goal, the BLM conveyance crew is developing a comprehensive business plan that assigns a start and finish date to every village and regional selection and every Native Allotment application. And it's not just a paperwork exercise; BLM is allocating significant resources to the land transfer program to support the work plan.

Conveyance Deputy State Director Gary Reimer explains: "Fiscal year 2004 is the year we hire, train and prepare. 2005 and 2006 will be the years of mammoth production that prepare us for the sprint in 2007-2009."

To make this happen, Reimer is assembling a top-notch pool of existing expertise, complemented by a slate of new talent. **Krissell Crandall**, a former senior landman for BP Alaska, **Dick Thwaites**, a local attorney, and **Johanna Munson**, formerly of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, are among the recent hires on Reimer's management team.

These and other new faces are energizing the conveyance effort, while drawing heavily on a wealth of knowledge from BLM adjudicators with years of experience in the trenches of complex land law.

—continued on page 3

"We've always had warriors," says Reimer. "I'm adding more troops, more funding, more momentum, and together we're going to do what we've set out to do."

"Our work plan includes a schedule for every village and regional entitlement. We have a roadmap and we're going to follow it. We're going to work the issues as they come up, and we're going to take this effort to completion."

Land transfer resolution specialists will pave the way

They're called resolution specialists and they just might be headed your way. Their credentials: intimate knowledge of land law and natural resource conflict resolution. Their mission: informal mediation and resolution of some of the most complex challenges to completing the land transfer program in Alaska.

BLM's Conveyance Division has taken several bold steps in recent months to assemble the right mix of talent to take the Alaska land transfer program into the home stretch. One of the more innovative steps is the creation of four key positions tasked with working some magic just when it's needed most.

Johanna Munson left the Alaska Department of Natural Resources earlier this year to join the BLM conveyance team. She now heads the BLM branch responsible for much of the preparation and problem solving necessary for land survey and conveyance to take place.

"We know there are serious challenges to getting some of the regions to full entitlement," Munson explains. "The best way to tackle those challenges is to get out there and talk with our clients, learn what the issues are, and figure out how we can work together to resolve them."



Mike Bennett (standing) and Mark Fullmer study a map showing villages in the Calista Region to help plan their visits later this month.

To do this, BLM will rely on a mix of seasoned land law examiners coupled with newly hired expertise in natural resources management and mediation. They are:

- **Joe Labay**, a veteran BLM land transfer planner with more than two decades of experience in complex land law adjudication.

- **Lorri Denton**, a BLM land law examiner and seasoned realty specialist who has worked with BLM clients at field offices and at the state level.

- **Mark Fullmer**, an attorney with extensive background in commercial transactions, trusts, and Native allotments.

- **Mike Bennett**, a natural resources consultant with 20 years of natural resource conflict resolution and project management experience, most recently with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

These specialists have a rigorous travel itinerary planned for 2004.

They will travel to several regions and meet with village and regional corporations to listen to concerns, answer questions, and identify specific issues yet to be resolved in each area. They will also help ANCSA villages establish selection priorities, and resolve conflicts when various entities have overlapping claims to a given parcel.

BLM will continue to work closely with its partners—the State of Alaska, ANCSA corporations, and other federal agencies—to ensure that everyone is on board and on the same schedule.

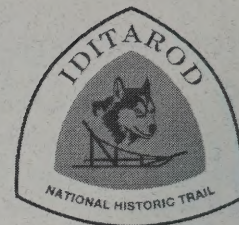
"The important thing is to get it done, and get it done with the full participation of our partners," explains Munson. "This is about the long term: providing certainty for landowners and managers, and allowing communities and the state to grow and plan for the future."

—Teresa McPherson



Just a quiet birthday

Iditarod NHT passes historic milestone



Say "Iditarod" and most Alaskans think of 1,200 yapping sled dogs excited to compete along the 1,000-plus mile race course between Wasilla and Nome. But there's a lot more to the Iditarod story, starting with an additional 1,300 miles of trails which altogether comprise the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

While the race generates excitement and publicity, the lesser-known historic trail by contrast quietly passed its silver anniversary last month. In 1978, Congress designated the Iditarod, along with the nationally-prominent Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and Lewis and Clark trails as the first of 22 national historic trails.

Following the Iditarod's recognition as the only national historic trail in Alaska, the BLM has collected much of the trail's history, crafted cooperative agreements, and is working to nominate sites to the National Register of Historic Places. BLM currently manages the Iditarod under the terms of a comprehensive management plan that establishes guidelines to promote the preservation, use and enjoyment of the historic route. BLM also initiates cooperative agreements among the various land managers and owners to mark and sign trails, provide access points and manage events.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail Advisory Council, an 11-member group representing the secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, the Governor of Alaska, and private land managers and users, helped in this effort. After its council charter expired in 1997, some of its members decided to form a nonprofit organization, Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc. to continue the work done by the advisory council. Another volunteer group, the Iditarod Trail Blazers, continues to provide trail maintenance and construction assistance.

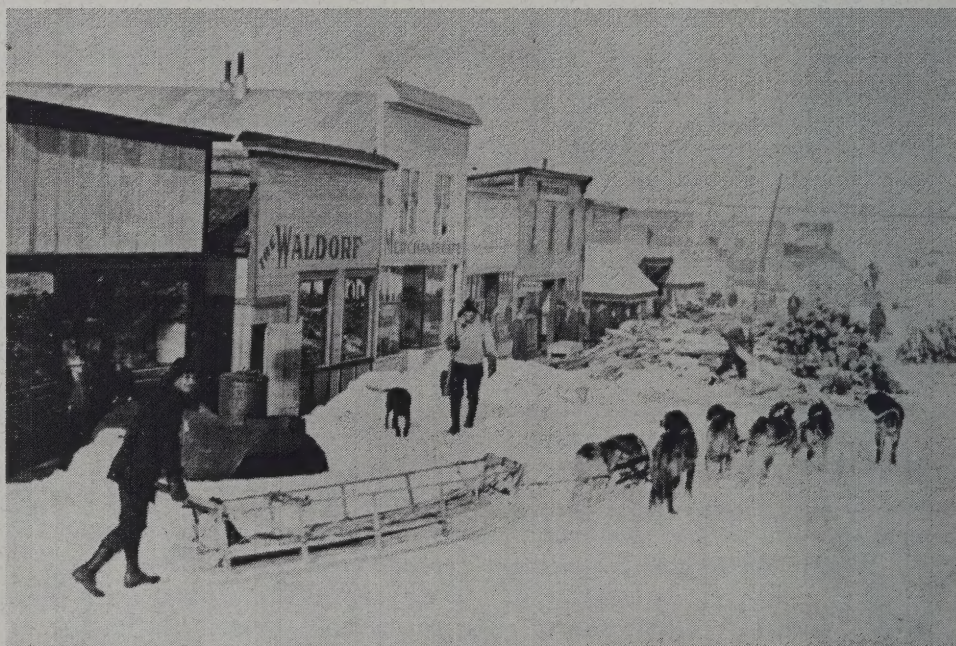
Mike Zaidlicz, BLM's trail coordinator, cites a number of BLM milestones: developing a comprehensive management plan, establishing a nonprofit organization; building four shelter cabins and two bridges; marking and maintaining 400-plus miles of trail on BLM land and hundreds of miles

of trail on partners' lands. "But I need to emphasize that BLM did not do this alone. We relied on the involvement of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc. and state and other federal agencies to assist."

Zaidlicz says there is still much work remaining, especially in the area of public recognition. One of his goals is to make the Iditarod as recognizable to Americans as the Lewis and Clark Trail. This will be a challenge because of the trail's remoteness and lack of easy access.

Looking to the future, Zaidlicz would like to see an Iditarod National Historic Trail visitor's center. He is seeking funding to accomplish a feasibility study for the proposed center.

"We'll use the study to determine its size, complexity and location. The study will also provide answers about who will be involved and to



Anchorage Museum of History and Art

In the early 1900s, Seward served as the gateway to the goldfields of the Interior. Here goldseekers would arrive by steamer, then load up on supplies before heading out on the Iditarod Trail. Travel was easiest during the winter.



what degree, and what materials we will need to display.

"The Iditarod is one of only a few trails NOT to have an interpretive or visitor's center. I believe the center will provide information and appreciation of the trail's historic value to millions of visitors who have heard of the Iditarod yet have no central location to gather information and answers," said Zaidlicz.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc. assists BLM in maintaining and interpreting the trail. "They can also do things we can't," said Zaidlicz, "such as obtain grants and funding from private sources to help manage the trail; acquire lands, property rights of way and easements to enhance the trail corridor. They also act as an umbrella organization to assist local volunteer groups such as the Iditarod Trail Blazers and historical societies."

Dan Seavey, INHT, Inc. vice president, describes long term efforts as establishing a contiguous primary route from Seward to Nome, preserving all the historic sites, renovating historic structures for use as shelters along the trail system, and educating people throughout the world about the historic significance of the trail.

"People are what history is all about," said Seavey. "We have a responsibility to preserve this historic information as much as possible for future generations. We need to make the human element—information about miners and mail carriers; good and bad guys—available to the public, available to researchers."

In the interim, though, the INHT, Inc. is working with the U.S. Forest Service on the trail from Seward to Crow Pass at Girdwood. Seavey estimates it will cost between \$15 million-to \$22 million to complete. The project calls for improving 100 miles of trail and building 23 bridges. "If the Iditarod fairy could wave her wand we could complete this project by 2008 which

will mark the hundred year anniversary of gold being discovered in Iditarod," said Seavey.

For 22 years Seavey has also served as president of the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers. He's also seen the Iditarod trail from the perspective of a musher running the Iditarod Sled Dog Race in 1973, 1997 and 2000. In 2000, three generations of Seaveys ran the 1,100 miles.

"The Iditarod is a magic word

now. When Robert Sorlie of Norway won (the 2003 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race), the event truly became an international event," said Seavey.

With the vision of BLM and INHT, Inc., this reminder of the trail's unique and vibrant past and appreciation of its solitude and beauty should one day be nationally and internationally known.

—Donna Gindle

 www.anchorage.ak.blm.gov/inhthome.html

Hunters, miners, and mushers shape Iditarod history



Sled dog team arriving at BLM's Campbell Tract at the conclusion of the ceremonial start in Anchorage in 2003.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail is one of 22 trails designated by Congress to recognize their significance as scenic or historic transportation routes.

The Iditarod Trail, a network of more than 2,300 miles, was used by ancient native hunters, Russian explorers and early 20th century gold seekers. It is named after the Athabascan Indian village near a 1908 gold discovery. By 1910, a gold rush town flourished and for a time was the center of the Iditarod Mining District. The trail was officially surveyed by the U.S. Army's Alaska Road Commission in 1908 and dubbed the Seward to Nome Mail Trail. It was heavily used until 1924 when the airplane became the transportation mode of choice.

In 1925, dog teams and drivers recaptured the attention of the nation in a dramatic tale of courage and stamina. A diphtheria epidemic threatened the town of Nome which did not have enough serum to inoculate the community. When weather prevented serum delivery by airplane, a relay of dog teams was dispatched from the town of Nenana to carry the serum down the Tanana and Yukon rivers to the Iditarod Trail. Twenty mushers carried the serum 674 miles in 127 hours. The mushers and dog teams became heroes, earning presidential medals and being immortalized in statues across the country. The era of the sled dog and the Iditarod Trail mushed out in a blaze of glory.

The Iditarod Trail was forgotten for more than 40 years until the 1960s when interest in sled dog racing was renewed. In 1967, the first Iditarod race was staged between Knik and Big Lake on nine miles of the old Iditarod Trail. In 1973, the race was run between Anchorage and Nome. Since then, the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race has come to be known internationally as the "Last Great Race."

ALASKA'S JURASSIC PARK

Colville River teases scientists with clues to extinctions, climate change

One of the most popular exhibits in years opened this fall at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art—a complete *Tyrannosaurus* skeleton replica on loan from the Field Museum in Chicago. Busloads of schoolchildren and throngs of adults have been getting a unique look at an ancient life form.

Most people associate dinosaurs with tropical jungles and would doubt dinosaurs could have lived in northern Alaska. Yet dinosaurs not only lived here more than 65 million years ago, they thrived!

The story of dinosaurs in Alaska began in 1961 when a geologist exploring along the Colville River on Alaska's North Slope accidentally discovered what he thought were bone samples from Ice Age animals, probably no more than two million years old.

In 1978, another geologist discovered dinosaur footprints near Big Lake on the Alaska Peninsula. That revolutionized thinking. In 1984 a USGS geologist reexamined the 1961 fossils and identified them as the first dinosaur bones found in the state.

In the mid-1980s, paleontologists from the University of California at Berkeley and the University of

Alaska Museum in Fairbanks began exploring for dinosaur remains on lands managed by BLM along the Colville River region and elsewhere on Alaska's North Slope. What they found was startling. Dinosaur bones were found eroding from the riverbank along a stretch of the Colville River more than 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle. They were in such abundance at this one location that during the next few years more dinosaur bones were recovered there than from all other known polar dinosaur bone localities in the world combined, including those from Russia, Canada, Australia, and Antarctica. The enormity of this discovery is still not generally recognized by the public. It is a world-class deposit that holds many secrets that can only be revealed through future scientific work.

In 1998, an exciting new dinosaur discovery on Alaska's North Slope included extensive dinosaur footprints called trackways. These provide evidence of seven different meat- and plant-eating dinosaurs, including very odd oval-shaped tracks of a yet unknown species. Equally significant, they date from the

Sauromitholestes

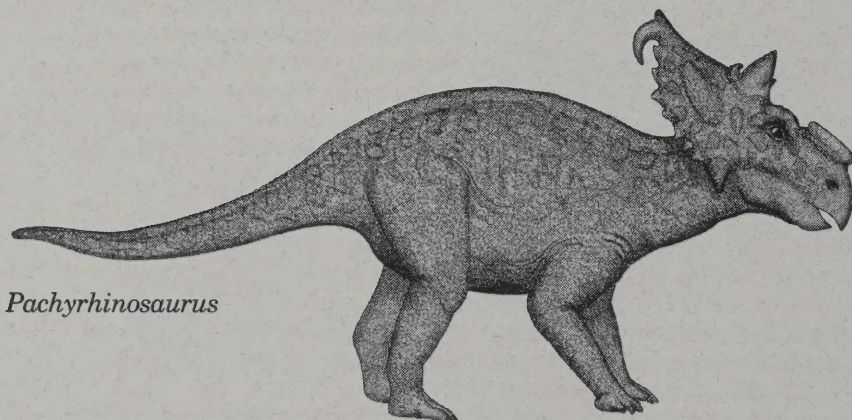
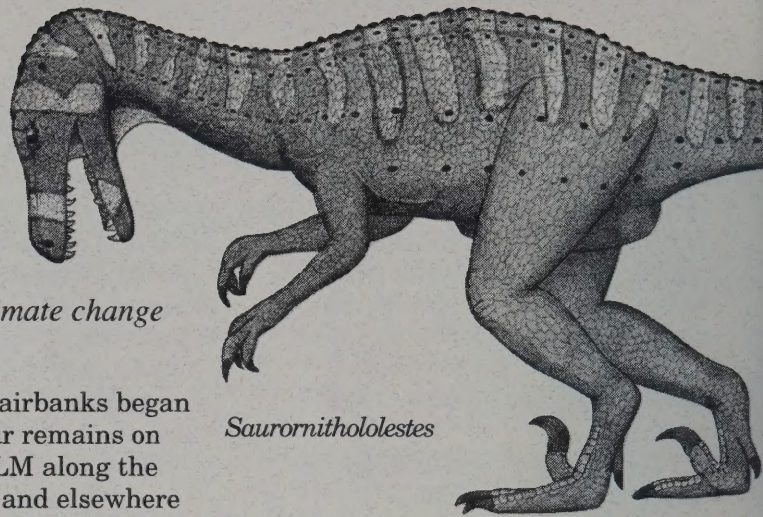
middle Cretaceous period, about 90-110 million years ago, making them far older than the other bone fossils found on the North Slope.

To date, at least 12 different types of dinosaurs have been found on the North Slope. The first type found, and the one from which the greatest number of bones have been recovered, was an impressive plant-eater called *Edmontosaurus*. This is a hadrosaur, a large duck-billed dinosaur that walked on two legs, stood up to 10 feet tall, was more than 40 feet long, and weighed 3 or more tons when fully grown.

Soon, more types of plant-eaters were found, as well as sharp-toothed fast-moving carnivores which fed on hadrosaurs and anything else they could kill for food. Among the most notable of the meat-eaters were two large ones: *Albertosaurus*, up to 10 feet tall and 15-17 feet long, and *Tyrannosaurus*, up to 15 feet tall and 10-15 feet long.

Other meat-eaters found on the North Slope of Alaska include two which were similar to the scary and very lethal *Velociraptor* dinosaurs made famous for chasing children in the movie *Jurassic Park*.

Another fascinating recent dinosaur discovery along the Colville has been teeth and a skull fragment from *Troodon* dinosaurs. These were also meat-eaters, about 6 feet tall and weighing several hundred pounds. Though not equally endowed with sharp teeth and claws like the *Velociraptor*-



Pachyrhinosaurus

types, or massive size like the other meat-eaters, the advantages *Troodons* had were large brains and large eyes which, like today's cats, probably made them better adapted for hunting during twilight or at high latitudes.

Rounding out the 6 known meat-eaters is the most recent discovery of all—one not yet widely publicized. It is an ostrich-like dinosaur, called *Ornithomimid*, known only from a single, yet distinctive, foot bone. This animal was 11-19 feet long and weighed more than 200 pounds. It was especially birdlike in that it ran on two slim hind legs and had a long, toothless beak. Scientists believe it ate small animals as well as plants some 70 million years ago.

But perhaps the most interesting of all the North Slope plant-eaters is the *Pachycephalosaurus*-type dinosaur. To date, only an egg-sized skull fragment of this most curious dinosaur has been found, yet that's sufficient to establish its presence in ancient Alaska.

There are still many mysteries about these enigmatic animals and there probably always will be! How did they survive so far north? Did they slow their metabolism or hibernate during the long sunless winters? Did they migrate southward for food and warmer climate? Indeed, how did they so successfully survive here in Alaska for at least 80 million or more years?

To develop answers, scientists turn toward the most recent dinosaur discoveries on the North Slope. For example, studies of the small meat-eaters such as the *Troodon* and *Dromaeosaurus* have provided evidence that they probably couldn't have physically migrated the 5,000 miles needed to reach areas of year-round plant growth. Instead, the scientists hypothesize that the North Slope dinosaurs probably survived without leaving



The cliffs along the Colville River have been gradually revealing the secrets to prehistoric life for more than 40 years.

W

More on northern dinosaurs...
www.ak.blm.gov/ak930/cultrl.htm

ancient river systems that supported lush summer vegetation. Enough seasonal plants probably grew during the 24-hour sunlit summers to last during the cool-to-cold dark days of winter, thus supporting year-round the meat-eating dinosaurs at the top of the food chain.

While studies continue of the dinosaur remains in Alaska, there is equal interest in finding more evidence of what the environment was like at that time. Geologists tell us that the North Slope is still located at about the same latitude as it was when dinosaurs lived there around 65 million years ago. Yet plant fossils suggest that the climate may have been more like that of present-day Seattle.

Perhaps the most important question that Alaska's North Slope dinosaurs may help answer is "Why did the dinosaurs go extinct?" This is a question with more relevance than ever before as scientists uncover more evidence of the five or more mass extinctions during the past billion years. Did a meteor strike the earth about 65 million years ago? Did it throw up dust to block the sun,

which then set off fires and a chain-reaction collapse of the food chain leading to the end of all dinosaurs as well as many more plants and animals? Maybe, though even this is being seen by some paleontologists as a too-simple model. There is increasing scientific debate within the field of paleontology as to the importance of widespread volcanic activity that also happened about this same time.

Finally, there is very recent evidence of a possible second comet impact around 65 million years ago. So was the mass extinction of 65 million years ago more of a "one-two-three punch" of volcanism and perhaps two comet strikes? And could humans develop the technology to do anything about it in the future if our world were once again similarly threatened? Exciting questions! And further studies of the long-lost world of Alaska's fabulous North Slope dinosaurs may help provide answers.

—Robert King

Illustrations ©Carl Ramm

Alaska fire crews see plenty of action in 2003

Alaska's wildland firefighters had their busiest March on record in 2003 when strong winds and dry humidity caused a period of extreme fire conditions in Southcentral Alaska. Winds of 60 to 100 miles an hour fanned 15 fires in the Matanuska-Susitna Area and the Kenai Peninsula on March 13. Four emergency firefighter crews and a crew of smokejumpers and fire specialists were called to the fires, contending with windchill factors of 30 degrees below zero.

March was also unusually busy for the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC). In addition to the support for the fires in Southcentral, the AICC sent 10 crews from Alaska to work on the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery effort in Texas.

The remainder of 2003 was more like a normal fire season. On June 17, a lightning strike started a wildfire that quickly threatened structures near Central. Cloudy weather and cooler temperatures set in the next day and a Type 2 Team and more than 140 firefighters had the fire 75 percent contained by June 19.

Meanwhile, the Sand Creek Fire, near the Goodpaster Fire, had grown to more than 23,000 acres. About 135 firefighters were deployed to protect

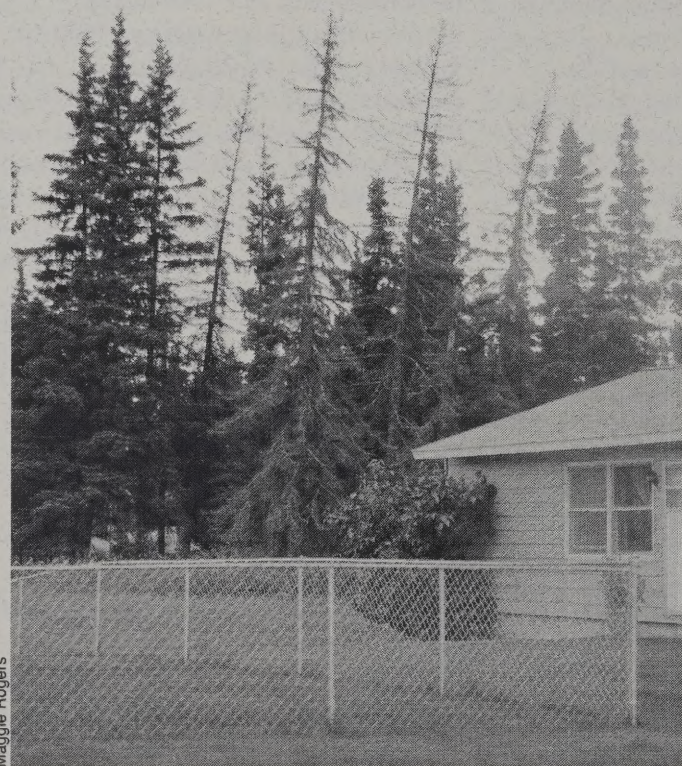
numerous recreational cabins in the area. A Type 2 Team, the last of the season, was deployed on the fire from June 24 to June 30.

Lightning activity peaked on June 17 and 18, when 15 fires started. One of those fires was in a limited suppression area near Hess Creek; two days later it reached an upslope area of black spruce and took off. Moving with 100-foot flame lengths, it easily crossed the Dalton Highway and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Gate valves and other equipment were protected at a few strategic points along the pipeline, but the fire did not require a large suppression effort. The fire reached 117,000 acres and was the second largest fire of the season. (The Hadweenzic Fire, which began June 24, 50 miles west of Fort Yukon, burned 120,000 acres.)

All of the 65 available emergency firefighter crews were mobilized to incidents during the 2003 season. Twenty-three crews were mobilized more than once. Twenty-five crews were sent to fires in the Lower 48 and four crews were sent to fires in British Columbia. Federal wages to Emergency Fire Fighters totaled \$3.3 million. The total for state wages is still being tabulated.

—continued on page 9

Tree thinning reduces fire danger on Army post



Maggie Rogers

Forested areas provide a scenic backdrop throughout the family housing section of Fort Richardson in Anchorage. Here trees provide places for children to play and their parents to recreate. But there is danger here. If a wildfire started nearby, there would be little time to stop it before it would threaten homes.

The U.S. Army-Alaska Fort Richardson Fire Department, in conjunction with BLM Alaska Fire Service (AFS), coordinated work on a project to create defensible zones in the housing area consistent with the national Firewise program. This year, soldiers removed dead trees, cleaned up live trees and removed debris from one of the forested plots.

"Major attention goes to the military ranges because they are the areas where most of the fires ignite," said Assistant Fire Chief Randy Souhrada, "but the urban interface area must not be forgotten."

The soldiers removed beetle-killed trees, a major fire hazard. The standing-dead trees, some of which are up against houses on post, are very susceptible to fire. Living spruce were limbed six feet up from the ground. Meanwhile, work was done to clean up the understory to break up the fuel continuity.

AFS is providing technical support and equipment. The 20-acre plot is the first of many acres to be thinned in Stage One, which involves a non-aggressive thinning approach that removes all hazardous fuels. Another 35 to 50 acres will undergo treatment during the next two years. Souhrada says the long-term plan is to keep the area "beautiful but safe."

—Maggie Rogers

BLM Expands Resource Advisory Council

Secretary Gale Norton appointed six new members to the BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council, or RAC, in September, expanding the council from 13 to 15 members and making this the largest group since it was chartered in 1995.

The new members are from Fairbanks, Glennallen and Anchorage. They were selected for their knowledge of public lands issues in Alaska and their experience in seeking creative solutions to these issues.

The RAC has provided advice and recommendations on land withdrawals, public easements, wild and scenic rivers management, the Utility Corridor and the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

Each year one-third of the council seats become vacant. BLM will call for nominations in March 2004 for council members who represent commercial recreation, energy/minerals, conservation and dispersed recreation, and Alaska Native interests.

For more information about the council, including the 2004 schedule of meetings, visit www.ak.blm.gov/advisory.

—Teresa McPherson



(top) NFO Manager Bob Schneider gives the council a preview of the five alternatives analyzed in the Northwest NPR-A EIS during the fall council meeting in Anchorage.



(left) Suzanne McCarthy, Randall Frank, BLM State Director Henri Bisson, Keith Tryck, Evie Witten, and Teresa Imm.

2004 Alaska Resource Advisory Council

Oil & gas, mining and commercial recreation:

Charlie Boddy, Usibelli Coal Mine (Fairbanks)
Tom Crafford, geologist/consultant (Anchorage)
Philip Driver, Midnight Sun Adventures (Anchorage)
Gary Gustafson, BP Exploration (Anchorage)
Larry Taylor, Fortymile River Boat Tours (Eagle)

Conservation/environmental and dispersed recreation:

Sandra Key, Nature Conservancy of Alaska (Anchorage)
Suzanne McCarthy, River Wrangellers (Glennallen)
Susan Olsen, Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition (Anchorage)
Evie Witten, World Wildlife Fund (Anchorage)
David van den Berg, ArcticWild (Fairbanks)

Elected officials, Alaska Natives, and public-at-large:

Randall Frank, Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly
Teresa Imm, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (Anchorage)
Jim Posey, Municipal Light and Power (Anchorage)
Paul Roehl, Bureau of Indian Affairs (Anchorage)
Keith Tryck, consultant (Anchorage)

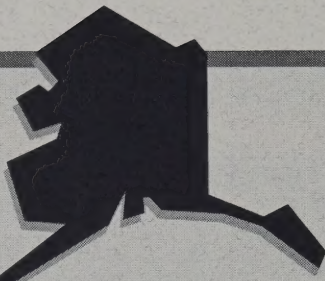
Photos by
Teresa McPherson

FIRE, continued from page 8

Alaska's Type 1 Interagency Incident Management Team reported to Arizona on July 15 and then to the Robert Fire in Montana on July 24. It returned to two more fires in Montana from Aug. 16 to Sept. 4. In all, the AICC filled 1,245 orders for overhead personnel in 2003.

For 2003, 465 wildfires burned 602,150 acres in Alaska; of these, 390 were human-caused fires that burned nearly 24,000 acres and 75 were lightning-caused fires that burned more than 578,000 acres.

—Andy Williams



Frontier Flashes

RECENT NEWS FROM AROUND ALASKA

Joint Pipeline Office Receives National Award



The Joint Pipeline Office has received the prestigious Iron Mountain Award for Excellence in Records and Information Management in Program Innovation and Improvement. Susan Anderson, JPO Records Analyst and Project Manager, received the award on behalf of the office at the annual meeting of the International Association for Information Management Professionals (ARMA) in Boston, Mass. This award encourages innovation and improvement in records and information management programs by recognizing specific initiatives or substantive program improvement.

Of the numerous entries submitted to ARMA for this category, only 12 that reflected significant and substantial improvements, expansion of a program, or integration of technology to substantially improve customer service were selected for final consideration.

JPO's entry covered one aspect of a larger project related to Information Accountability, records retention and records filing system. The 12 state and federal agencies that comprise the JPO must accurately record the business and history of JPO and record compliance and operation of pipelines and rights-of-way in accordance with various governing documents. This information is historic in nature.

John Kerrigan, State Pipeline Coordinator said, "The challenge was to create one retention plan and one basic filing system for the JPO incorporating the individual agency regulations. This was accomplished to cover JPO's unique needs with the bonus benefit to the agencies for access to an enormous cache of information accumulated over the years. We also anticipate substantial long-term savings and improved customer relations as a result of this project."

"The desired results have been surpassed for this project," commented Jerry Brossia, Federal Authorized Officer. "Information management is challenging for most offices today but our challenge was complicated times 12. We can now easily retrieve information and have greater confidence that we are meeting all regulatory requirements for records retention, not an easy feat to accomplish."

Energy kiosk in development

BLM-Alaska is developing an interactive energy kiosk, CD-ROM and website to help increase the public's energy awareness. The products will highlight the pros and cons of different energy sources, new technologies that tap energy reserves while minimizing damage to the environment, and renewable energy resources. Contractors, working with government, industry, conservation and education specialists, are expected to complete the work by March 2004. BLM's Campbell Creek Science Center will coordinate use of the products.

Fire comments sought

The Alaska Fire Service held public meetings in early December in Anchorage and Fairbanks to discuss ways to include fire management policies in current BLM land use plans. A public comment period closes Dec. 15. For more information, contact Andy Williams, (907) 356-5511.

New Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail brochure

BLM has published a new, revised brochure for hiking the Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail. This 26-mile trail is found 60 miles northeast of Fairbanks in the Steese National Conservation Area and is popular in mid-summer when wildflowers bloom and the midnight sun makes an appearance. Pick up copies at the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers in Anchorage, Fairbanks or Tok, or, BLM offices in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

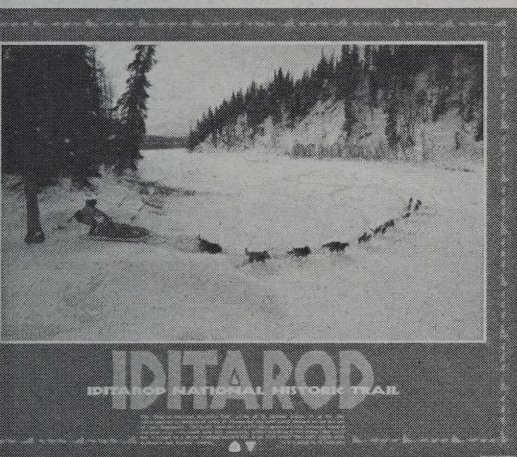




BLM signs agreement with Native Village of Barrow

BLM-Alaska has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Native Village of Barrow. The MOU provides for a formal mechanism to consult on activities that could impact the tribe, its members or their assets. The MOU is based on existing BLM manual guidance and the USDI Alaska Government-to-Government Consultation Policy developed and approved for use by all Interior Department agencies.

Photo above: BLM Alaska State Director Henri Bisson (left) and NVB President Percy Nusunginya signing the agreement in November.



Iditarod Poster Celebrates Silver

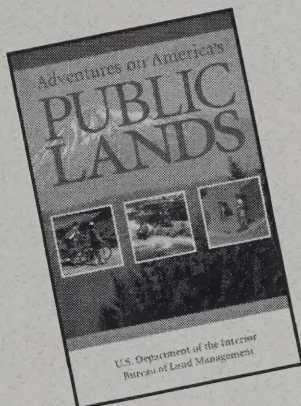
BLM-Alaska is producing a series of three stunning posters of the Iditarod in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The first in the series is now available, *while supplies last*, at the public information room of the Alaska State Office in the Anchorage Federal Building and at the Anchorage Field Office (6881 Abbott Loop Road). Limit one per family. The second poster will be released during the start of the Iditarod race in March.

Juneau Mineral Center Renamed

BLM renamed its Juneau Mineral Information Center as the John Rishel Mineral Information Center. The center is located on Mayflower Island in Douglas, Alaska.

The name is a tribute to Rishel, a professional legislative member for the Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources in Washington, D.C. He was a long-time pillar in the Alaska mining community. "John Rishel strongly supported the principle of sustainable resource development, and like this facility, was dedicated to increasing the understanding of Alaska's mineral resources," said acting Alaska Associate State Director Peter Ditton at the official dedication Oct. 23.

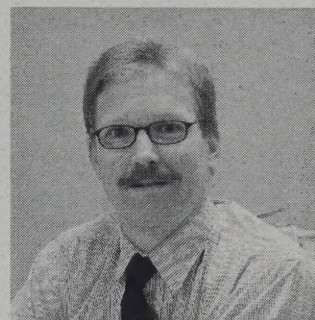
The center has recently expanded its outreach efforts to offer classes and demonstrations to local school children on the geology and mineral resources of Alaska, and, to increase its library capacity and public use functions.



New recreation guidebook published

BLM, in partnership with Smithsonian Books, has produced a full color guidebook, *Recreation on America's Public Lands*. The 510-page book features 190 maps, 231 photos and narratives on more than 100 locations in 20 states. The Alaska chapter contains information on the Dalton, Steese and Denali highways, Fort Egbert, the Fortymile, Delta and Gulkana rivers, Campbell Tract, and the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Copies can be obtained by mailorder from Smithsonian Books, 1-800-233-4830. A limited number of copies are available (while supplies last) from the BLM public information room on the first floor of the (new) Anchorage Federal Building. List price \$22.95.

Frontier People



New BLMer reports to Nome

Tom Sparks is BLM's new employee in its northernmost and westernmost office, Nome. Tom is well familiar with the area having worked the last 11 years with the Bering Straits Native Corporation in Nome.

Aniak Mining District study

BLM geologists have completed a seven-week field season in the northeast part of the Aniak Mining District in southwestern Alaska. They collected 351 rock, stream sediment, pan concrete, soil, and placer samples from the Ganes Creek-Beaver Mountains area southeast to the Windy Fork-Post River area. Prospectors or others interested can obtain a listing of the sample locations and sample types on the BLM-Alaska website at: www.ak.blm.gov/ak940/solids/aniak.html. Analytical results for the samples will be available later this winter.

Native allotments benefit

BLM-Alaska has developed a new spatial database that compares Native allotment information with mineral data. This new tool allows BLM to issue a single regional report on allotments that have no mineral potential, rather than issuing time-consuming individual reports. BLM has just released the first report prepared with the new technique which covers 177 allotments in the Calista Region. Eleven more reports for the other Native regional corporations will follow.

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(information about projects or events affecting the Campbell Tract in Anchorage)

☐ **Fireline**
(statewide wildfire information from the Alaska Fire Service, published twice a year)

Other information on:

☐ Alpine Satellite Development EIS
☐ Northeast NPRA plan amendment and EIS
☐ Northwest NPR-A land use plan and EIS
☐ Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan
☐ East Alaska Resource Management Plan

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Bureau of Land Management
Office of External Affairs
222 W. 7th Avenue #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

BLM Alaska Frontiers

Managing editor:
Edward Bovy, (907) 271-3318

Contributing writers:
Donna Gindle
Robert King
Craig McCaa
Teresa McPherson
Maggie Rogers

Cartography:
Carol Belenski

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Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

